

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – JULY 8, 2018

Dear Families and Parishioners,

Jesus returned early in his ministry to the place where he was brought up, Nazareth. As Jesus began his public ministry, Luke notes that he was led by the Spirit. Luke adds further: “Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee.”

When he came to Nazareth and was asked to speak in the Synagogue, the Scripture was unrolled. Jesus found this place: “The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me for He has anointed me”. May I suggest that you re-read this passage and replace the word Spirit with breath.

That word Spirit or breath reflects back to the second chapter of Genesis where we read: “God fashioned man of dust from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostril a breath of life and thus man became a living being.” Breath and Spirit have different etymologies, one Germanic, the other Latin. The words for breath or Spirit or wind can be used to translate the feminine Aramaic word *Ruach* and the feminine Hebrew word *ruah*.

One dictionary has pointed out that the words breath, or wind, or spirit are truly invisible, immaterial, but immensely powerful. Thus, God the Holy Spirit biblically has feminine attributes but with Godly power.

God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have always been. But when God decided to reveal the Divinity to the human world, God only first revealed the Divinity as unity. God did not reveal the Trinity. However, all the way through the Old Testament the breath of God and the power of God are noted. It is this Breath of God now called by most the Holy Spirit that we are trying further to understand as part of our Confirmation renewal and experience.

A Call to Those Not Confirmed

The Confirmation Plan for the Portage County Deanery is primarily for children in the eighth grade and high school. However, there may be college students and others who are older who have never received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Generally, the Diocese of Youngstown has an adult Confirmation Service in November or December. It takes place at the Cathedral. The Confirmation preparation in which we are involved will serve as the preparation for those older adults who wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Allow me to put this in explicit terms. God the Father promised through Jesus to send the Holy Spirit to be with us as an Advocate, a guide, a whisper in our ear as if we were being prompted while on stage. The Holy Spirit is the person of God who is being offered to each one of us. Who would turn down the advocacy of the most brilliant attorney to guide you through the perplexities of life, and at no cost? God himself is offered to you at no cost. This is a gift from the Father. Do not turn away a gift from God. Do not turn your back on the Holy Spirit!

Summer Festival

According to Mary Denny who is 108 year old, the first festival took place in 1919 when she was 9 years old. This is the 99th year of the Summer Festival.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
July 8, 2018